(c) the present stock of foodgrains in the Central godowns; and

(d) the reasons for increasing the price-rate of ration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) The total number of BPL families in the country is 652.03 lakh as on 1.3.2000 as per the population projections of the Registrar General of India. This represents 36% of the total number of families in the country.

(b) and (d) The Central Issue Prices of foodgrains issued under PDS for BPL and Antyodaya Anna Yojana have not been increased since 01.01.2001.

After 1.1.2001, the retail issue price of sugar through PDS has been increased twice, on 1.3.2001 (Rs. 1325/-per qtl.) and on 1.3.2002 (Rs. 1350/-per qtl.). The reason for increasing the price of sugar issued through PDS was to reduce the burden of subsidy on the exchequer.

The total stocks of stocks of foodgrains in Central Pool as on 1.11.2002 held by FCI and State agencies are 535.70 lakh tonnes.

Godowns in Himachal Pradesh

929. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal from Himachal Pradesh for opening of separate godowns in Lahaul Spiti, Kalpa and other far flung snow bound areas in the State;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government have taken/propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.